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**The Proceedings
of the
Unitarian Historical Society**

VOLUME VI

PART II

**WILLIAM HENRY CHANNING, A NEGLECTED FIGURE IN THE
HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM
WALTER SAMUEL SWISHER**

**QUINCY—THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE
ARTHUR BRYANT WHITNEY**

RECORDS AND NOTES

LIST OF MEMBERS AND ADDRESSES

1939

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Boston, Massachusetts**

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Unitarian Historical Society

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UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Unitarian Historical Society was founded in 1901. Its first president was the late Henry H. Edes of Boston, who served from 1901 to 1919, followed by Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, D. D., who served until 1930. The purpose of the Society is to collect and preserve books, periodicals, pamphlets, manuscripts, pictures and memorabilia which describe and illustrate the history of the Unitarian movement; to stimulate an interest in the preservation of the records of Unitarian churches; and to publish monographs and other material dealing with the history of individual churches, or of the Unitarian movement as a whole.

The Society welcomes to its membership all who are in sympathy with its aims and work. Persons desiring to join will send the membership fee, with their names and addresses, to the Treasurer, or \$50.00 for life membership. Each member receives a copy of the Proceedings. About 125 copies are sent to Libraries.

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MORE MEMBERS NEEDED

For the first time, a list of our members is being printed. Our reasons for printing the list are: (1) To show that the Society deeply appreciates the loyalty of those we have, and (2) to emphasize our appeal for new members.

The fact that we have only 84 members now speaks for itself. We need at least as many more to enable us to continue our work satisfactorily.

Membership is Two Dollars annually.

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WHY NOT AN ENDOWMENT?

1. **Twenty Thousand** for the Society. Two thousand already in sight. American Unitarian Association to act as Trustee.
2. **Thirty thousand** additional for the A. U. A. would enable the Association itself to have a Librarian, to care for, catalogue and guard its valuable collections, and make the Library far more useful.

We appeal to our present members and to Unitarians who believe that History means not only Gratitude for the Past but Inspiration for the Present and Future.

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WILLIAM HENRY CHANNING

A Neglected Figure in the History of Unitarianism

By Walter Samuel Swisher, D. D.

IN THE early 1830s there was a group of able young men in the Harvard Divinity School, men who were to distinguish themselves in Unitarian pulpits and exert a wide influence upon the thought of their time. Among these men were James Freeman Clarke, Ephraim Peabody, Frederick Henry Hedge, William Greenleaf Eliot, and William Henry Channing. We are concerned with the latter, though these friends stood shoulder to shoulder all their lives long and evinced an esprit de corps rare in this or in any day.

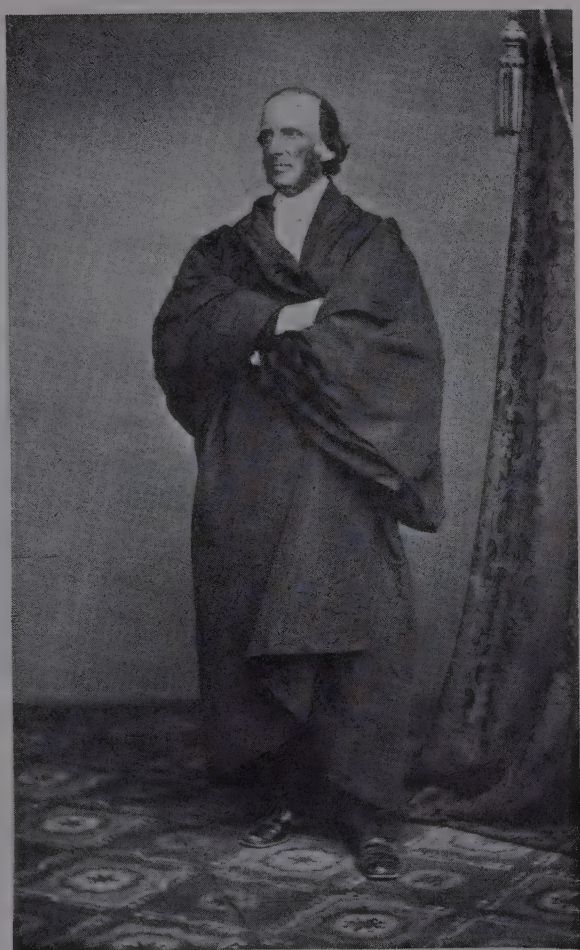
William Henry Channing was born in 1810 in Boston and died in London in 1884. This means that he lived through the great transition — the transition from an agricultural to an industrial era, the transition from stage-coach and canal boat to railroad and telegraph.

Channing's father, Francis Dana Channing, died the year that William Henry Channing was born. The fact that he was fatherless at so early an age doubtless had much to do in shaping his character. Just what it did, I do not know. His distinguished uncle, William Ellery Channing, was a second father to him, and his good mother, Susan Higginson Channing, drew much helpful advice from the boy's uncle. What a boyhood this must have been, so near to that great man!

Channing studied at the Boston Latin School, graduated from Harvard College in 1829 in the same class with Oliver Wendell Holmes, and from the Harvard Divinity School in 1833.

Now began years of rapid change. He was always a strange composite of decision and vacillation, filled with love of his kind and anxiety to alleviate the sorrows of the world, yet always doubtful of his own power to help. After graduating from the Harvard Divinity School, he supplied in several churches. Among these was the small Society at Meadville, whose pulpit he supplied in 1834. On the journey thither he talked with a boy, the captain of a canal boat, and an Irish Protestant minister. He expresses great respect for their intelligence. "It was," he writes, "one more instance of what I have long believed; that the common people of this country equal their betters in stamina of mind, good sense, high feeling, even if they want the final touch of the master's chisel." This thought was an integral part of his philosophy of life. As a student he had written in his notebook: "Man is naturally pure and good, endowed with strong passions, which uncurbed make him a child of hell but which, properly repressed, give activity, warmth, beauty and energy, to his whole character."

In these two passages we have two of the main tenets of New England Transcendentalism: first, man is inherently good; he needs but to be shown the right path and he will tread it: second, although not perfect, man is perfectible; the road to perfectibility is through education. If man is shown the path to Truth, he will gladly follow it. He errs through ignorance. It is unfortunately not true, for many men have known the right path and have not followed it. Human greed and human selfishness get in the way. We detect a certain naiveté in the thought of the Transcendentalists. Whenever they attempted to apply these ideas, as at Brook Farm and Hopedale, in any concrete way, inevitably and invariably they came to grief. Their true strength lay, not in their metaphysics which was a dim adumbration of the German philosophy of their time, but in their humanitarianism. Let us consider the genesis of their philosophy.



William Henry Channing.

These early decades of the nineteenth century were the *Sturm und Drang* period of Europe. The Napoleonic wars, which had kept Europe in turmoil, were ended. Now men began to have leisure and sufficient peace of mind to develop their thought. The great Romantic Movement in German literature had begun. In the literary firmament Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing were the bright particular stars. There was a Renaissance of thought. Philosophy turned to Ancient Greece for inspiration. Hegel, Kant, and Fichte, were the philosophical descendants of Socrates and Plato. There is an ideal world above and beyond the material world. This world of the ideal transcends the natural world. There was great discussion over the nature of the soul. A young man named Henry Wadsworth Longfellow returned from Europe and taught German literature under the aegis of his Alma Mater, Bowdoin College.

The coterie of young minds in the Harvard Divinity School of whom I have spoken began to be interested in German philosophy. The thought of these great thinkers, which had so far been available only in the original tongue, was now translated. Most assiduous of these translators was Frederic Henry Hedge, whose translation of Luther's "*Ein' Feste Burg*" is in every hymn book. Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Fichte, and Lessing's great work on aesthetics, the *Laocoon*, were translated into English.

Other things were happening in our country. The 1830s were an era of building and development. The Great West, hitherto an empty waste save for the Indian, the trapper, and great herds of buffalo and antelope, was being opened to pioneer and settler. Experiment and discovery were in the air. Young men entering the liberal ministry thought to find in the West fertile field for the Unitarian gospel. It was the old Socratic idea that if people only knew the truth, they would follow it. As a matter of fact, the religion of the frontiersman is strongly fundamentalist. This for two reas-

ons: first, because of his ignorance and the fatalistic philosophy born of dependence upon the elements; second, because the narrow-minded, bigoted, zealot has always had the strongest missionary impulse. The backwoodsman is his easy prey.

Henry Channing followed his friends into the West and in 1838 took the pulpit in Cincinnati left vacant by his friend, Ephraim Peabody. Here he remained some three years.

Channing had the defects of his qualities. He was ardent, eager to embrace new causes, strong in their support—until a newer cause appeared on the horizon. He was kindly, extremely sensitive, doubtful of his own powers. He worked up great enthusiasms which tended to die under the pressure of events.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson in **Heralds of the Liberal Faith**, describes him as of dark complexion, with black hair and brilliant eyes. He was of impetuous nature and fervid eloquence. Strikingly handsome in his youth, he was always of distinguished appearance. He was active and versatile in his habits, stainless in morals, ready of speech, overflowing in sympathy, eager to do and dare.*

How to account for his vacillations and changes of view, I do not know. Higginson says that "perhaps his extreme unselfishness worked against him." Here was a sensitive soul reared in the atmosphere of the finest culture of the New England of the early nineteenth century, then brought suddenly and violently into contact with a ruthless world. The good and fruitful part of Transcendentalism was the dream of a humanity redeemed through human, social effort. We should agree with them in this, except that now we realize that education is not enough. In the end, they came to realize this, too. Channing talked a great deal of a "transfigured humanity." In this he saw a "heavenly hope." It

**Heralds of the Liberal Faith*, Vol. III, pp. 60-61.

is one of the debts that we owe Transcendentalism that it transferred the Kingdom of Heaven from somewhere far off in Time and Space to this world of struggling men and women. Utopia was to come, but it must come through human effort. If we are not so sanguine as they, still we must admit that this faith in the inherent goodness and perfectibility of human nature lent strength to their arm. This, so far from being incompatible with their mysticism, was a part of it. For the Ideal, Invisible World of the Spirit — the world of the mystic — is in the heart of man. They lived in an expanding universe, in which mankind progressed onward and upward forever! There seemed no limit to the expansion of the country or of the human spirit.

Resolved to bring the liberal gospel to working people, Channing spent the years from 1843 to 1845 as leader of an independent society among the poor of New York City. Its members were "fellow seekers after a higher holiness, wisdom, and humanity." Channing's soul was harrowed by the plight of the submerged tenth in the great city. The society broke up when Channing felt the call to go to Brook Farm.

We need not here recite the story of Brook Farm. It failed largely because philosophers and literary men are not farmers. Van Wyck Brooks says that when it was time to gather the crops, the philosophers were away filling lecture engagements. Channing remained but a few months.

The Transcendentalists were proclaiming the omnipotence of thought, the triumph of great ideas and ideals. On January 3, 1847, the Religious Union of Associationists was formed in Boston with Channing as its leader. It included such men as George Ripley, John S. Dwight, Thomas G. Shaw, and Albert Brisbane. Its object was "mutual sympathy and aid in striving to spread among mankind the reign of love." Its statement was sublime. If we modern, practical folk are tempted to smile at what we conceive to be

the grandiloquence of such statements, let us not forget that it was this sublime and unconquerable faith that lent strength to the arm of these early Unitarians and enabled them to accomplish miracles in the way of education and reform, though they continued to be but few in the land. The statement drawn up by Channing ran thus:

"In Faith that it is the will of God by the ministry of man to introduce upon this planet an era of Universal Unity;

In Hope of the advent of the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth, desired by the good and wise of all ages and clearly announced by Jesus Christ;

And moved by the Holy Spirit which impels this generation to long and labor for the perfect at-onement:—

We do now consecrate ourselves unreservedly to the service of our Heavenly Father, in the purpose to live for the fulfillment of the designs of His Providence, and do pledge to one another our faithful sympathy, counsel, aid, in striving to spread among mankind the reign of love."

This group lasted for three years. Perhaps the discrepancy between its unlimited ambition for doing good and its power of accomplishment was too great. Perhaps its members made the mistake so common in our day: the belief that when we meet, confer, and appoint a committee, we have accomplished something. Possibly they thought that when they had met, listened to certain numbers from Mozart's Twelfth Mass, subscribed to the Statement of Faith, and joined hands in a circle, some great thing was already done.

On December 16, 1850, Channing wrote a sad letter, filled with the spirit of defeat. He would like, he says, to

"seek a settlement in the country . . . where a decent subsistence can be insured and where for a few quiet years I may be a father to my children. My whole soul, exhausted by excitement, disappointed, saddened, taught to wait, postponing, though not in one jot or tittle abating its hope, foreseeing the impending crisis, unapt for contention, loathing violent measures, sick of mammon worship and political leaders and earthly ambition of all sorts, craves the stillness of beautiful nature. Cities are a hell to me."*

"The impending crisis!" Fateful words! What follows in the life of Channing must be viewed in the light of the national crisis that ended in the Civil War. Channing was increasingly interested in the abolition of slavery. From September of 1843 to April 1844 he was editor of *The Present*, which frankly called itself a Socialistic organ. From July 1849 to April 1850 he edited the *Spirit of the Age*.

After leaving Boston in 1850, a bitterly disappointed man, he spent the next two years in a variety of activities. He wrote and spoke for the abolition of slavery; he labored for the emancipation of women, and sought to promote peace — the storm clouds of civil strife were lowering. The untimely death of his friend Margaret Fuller saddened him. The times were becoming more and more disturbed.

He accepted a call to Rochester in the summer of 1852 and remained until August, 1854. Then he went to England where most of the rest of his life was to be spent and where he seems to have been happiest. From October of 1854 to October of 1857, he was minister of Renshaw Chapel, Liverpool. At first the slowness of the tempo of English life irked him. As Octavius Frothingham says in his *Memoir of Channing* (p. 282), in England things seemed static, whereas in America there "was experiment after experiment, an atmosphere of change."

**Memoir of William Henry Channing*, O. B. Frothingham, p. 249

Now began that dramatic series of events that was to bring together for a brief moment William Henry Channing and a young Union soldier, dying in a crude hospital far from home, my uncle, James Swisher. In the autumn of 1856, Moncure D. Conway resigned the Unitarian pulpit in Washington. Channing had long felt that it was his duty to return to the United States. Here was a possible opportunity. He wrote his friends, among whom were Ezra Stiles Gannett, Henry W. Bellows, James Freeman Clarke, Horace Greeley and William Greenleaf Eliot. His friends sought to dissuade him. Things were unsettled here. The Washington society was small. Opposition to free, radical speech was strong. The meeting-house was out of repair. The plan fell through.

Now there was a new opening in England. James Martineau was called from the Hope Street Chapel in Liverpool to London and in 1857 Channing took his pulpit.

In 1861, a little more than three years later, Channing came to America for a visit, promising to return to England. Then the storm broke. War was declared. Boys from northern farms and cities and from cities and plantations of the south hastened to the colors. My uncle James was eighteen years old, the main support of his widowed mother on their small farm. When he went, my father, a boy of fifteen and his younger brother were left to run the farm. Young James Swisher fought in a few battles, wrote loving letters home, then fell ill and was invalided first to an army hospital in Virginia, then to the Stanton Memorial Hospital in Washington. It was there that he and Channing met.

Late in the summer of 1861, Channing had come to Washington to judge of the situation there, and was invited to remain as minister of the Unitarian Society. Releasing himself from obligations in England, he accepted the call. Together with Dr. Bellows and other great liberals, he help-

ed to organize the Sanitary Commission. Under the auspices of the Sanitary Commission he visited the front and nursed the wounded. He visited the camps around Fredericksburg where he may even have seen and talked with my uncle.

Now came the disastrous campaigns and the long delays as the army of the Potomac lay inert. Let us hear Octavius Frothingham on this subject:

“. . . During the following autumn and winter (fall of 1862 and winter of 1862 and 1863) when the dreadful nightmare of inert immobility paralyzed the splendid army of the Potomac, and the intrigues of political time-servers chilled the very heart of the Republic, while the pitiless rains and muddy quagmires sickened in their ill-provided camps our impatient soldiers . . . it was Channing's sad satisfaction to aid in the service of the Sanitary Commission.”

My young uncle was in one of those ill-provided camps, without shoes, since our politicians at Washington had not let supplies come through, and waiting in his ragged uniform while he sickened in what proved to be his last illness. On October 7, 1862, he had written his mother: “Our company is all going to sticks. Out of one thousand we can scarcely muster fifty, the others being sick.”

Wounded, sick, and dying soldiers were pouring into Washington that winter. Every possible building was turned into an emergency hospital. Hastening back from one of his trips to the front, Channing turned his church into an improvised hospital by boarding over the pews. The Federal Government invited the Society to meet in the Senate chamber.

Largely through Channing's efforts, a large wooden hospital was built and named the Stanton Memorial Hospital, after the Secretary of War. Channing obtained a com-

mission as chaplain in the new hospital. To this building James Swisher was moved on February 7, 1863, from a hospital camp at Windmill Point, Virginia.

Soon after, a kindly, sensitive-faced man of some fifty years came in and announced that he was a Mr. Channing, Chaplain of the Hospital. A friend writing home at this time says that "James has a kind chaplain." He visited James frequently, talked with him, comforted him, and let the boy dictate letters home to his mother. In the old file which came to me, there are letters from James in Channing's hand.

Channing wrote comforting letters to my grandmother, telling her what a good son she had in James.. He was with the boy when he died. He wrote my grandmother. I quote these lines because they seem to express the character of William Henry Channing even more than that of my young uncle:

Feb. 23, 1863

"Your son's whole religious nature is what I delight to see — submissive, gentle, confiding in God, full of peace. He is a very dear, sweet-tempered, affectionate, pure-hearted, sincere, devout youth — and whether he is to live here below or to pass in his early years to a better world . . . he is a son in whom a mother may well feel the deepest satisfaction. He has not lived in vain."

Could a more comforting letter be sent to a mother distraught over the imminent death of her beloved son?

On the second day of March in 1863, my Uncle James died in the Stanton Memorial Hospital, aged 19 years, 7 months, and 17 days. The next day "Chaplain Channing" took time to write my grandmother a long letter in which he said:

"You may well thank God, in your heart, that he heard your prayers and gave you so good a son . . . Of the many men I have met in my hospital life in Washington, I have not seen a single one who had from first to last appeared to be so heavenly-minded—sincere, humble, hopeful, loving and devoted as your son James. In every word and deed and look he was exactly what I should have wished."

It was like Channing to identify himself with the humble; here is a soul who took the world's burden of grief upon himself.

My grief-crazed grandmother soon followed her son to the grave. In the old file of letters is one which she wrote to a friend, which quotes liberally from Channing's last letter to her. It is so blotted in places as to be illegible.

The next winter, that of 1863-64, Channing was invited to be chaplain of the House of Representatives. He remained in America until the close of the war, then returned to England where the rest of his life was spent. He left these shores a saddened and disheartened man. The hospitals were closed and the Unitarian Church, according to Frothingham, had sunk into a temporary decline.

Moreover, Channing himself was a little suspect among Unitarians in America. His espousal of Fourier and his socialistic ideas had not helped him. He was considered, too, something of a mystic and visionary. He was somewhat out of tune with things here; in England he felt at home.

He grew intimate with the literary men and women of England. He knew Robert Browning for whose poetry he developed a strong liking. A son, Francis Allston Channing, took the Arnold prize at Oxford. Edwin Arnold, not yet "Sir Edwin," was a frequent visitor at the Channing home. He married Channing's daughter.

Channing visited these shores occasionally. In the summer of 1880 he gave a course of four lectures at the Concord School of Philosophy on "Oriental and Mystic Philosophy." These were commended by Frederic Henry Hedge. On these visits he renewed his acquaintance with Emerson, Samuel Longfellow, and Julia Ward Howe.

He died in London on December 23, 1884 and his body was brought back to his native Boston to be buried.

Was William Henry Channing one of those ineffectual angels, who dream great dreams which end in futile beating of the wings? Some there were who said so: they said that his life was futile, that he dreamed great dreams which came to nothing, that his career was aimless and ineffective. It is not true.

He was one of the most brilliant and vivid preachers of his time, exceeding in eloquence his great uncle. He was the most human and kindest of men.

When all is summed up, what is failure and what success? We live in a selfish, nay, a ruthless world — a world of unprecedented ruthlessness, a world which is becoming more and more callous to human suffering. We need to have the humanitarian note sounded anew. Unless something that we may call "compassion," or, better still, "human understanding" and "human sympathy" is born anew, our civilization is doomed.

Here was a man who proclaimed that religion is "a living bond of union between humanity and heaven." Furthermore, he lived his religion.

With me I shall always carry a vision of a great, bare wooden hospital. In one of its wards a man of finely cut features and of scholarly mien, a man with compassionate eyes, bends over a poor boy dying far from home and friends, a boy who, at the very end of his brief existence, may have learned something of the meaning of life.

QUINCY — 300 Years of Independence

By Arthur Bryant Whitney

YOU ENTER the majestic "Stone Temple" of the First Church in Quincy. You stand under the wide domed ceiling. You see, to the right of the high mahogany pulpit, a marble tablet, surmounted with a bust of the second President of the United States, done by Horatio Greenough. You go nearer to read the long inscription. This memorial to an illustrious father by his son was the first concern of the retiring sixth President of the United States, when he left behind him the unhappy confusion of Washington for the quiet of his own town. With loving care John Quincy Adams had studied every word set there in enduring stone. And you read: "John Adams! On the fourth of July, 1776, he pledged his life, fortune and sacred honour to the Independence of his Country. On the third of September, 1783, he affixed his seal to the definitive Treaty with Great Britain which acknowledged that Independence . . . On the fourth of July 1826 he was summoned to the Independence of Immortality and to the Judgment of his God."

The "Independence of Immortality!"

Add the last public act to this sturdy descendant, in the fourth generation, of one of the first settlers in old Brain-tree-Quincy since 1782—and you have the story of 300 years of Quincy and its First Church epitomized.

The year is now 1826. The citizens of Quincy are preparing the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The long list of toasts is being arranged. The chief toast, of course, must be proposed by the first citizen — first in local pride, first in

affection. The delegation waits on the ninety-year old John Adams. What sentiment will he offer on this auspicious occasion? The old man replies, at once; "Independence: Independence Forever." Yes, they had expected that; but will he add some embellishment of facile phrase to garland the toast? "No," says the man who made the Declaration a fact, "No, that is enough: that tells it all." And as the citizens, on July the fourth, 1826, were responding with huzzas to the sentiment of the great patriot, John Adams, linked again as in his ardent youth with Thomas Jefferson, has entered into the Independence of Immortality.

Our Quincy independence began with John Wheelwright, brother-in-law of William Hutchinson, the patient husband of Mistress Anne, the "Unafraid." The Hutchinson farmholding was at "the Mount" (Wollaston). Here came John Wheelwright, not welcome as a third minister with dour John Wilson and the brilliant if uncertain John Cotton, in the Boston Church. Classmate and friend of Oliver Cromwell, fearless, energetic, stubborn, a Dissenter, Wheelwright was 44 years of age when he landed in the colony. It was June the fourth, the day after Sir Harry Vane, young, liberal, talented, was elected Governor. The auspices seemed favorable, but the issue between bigotry and liberalism had been joined. Already Mrs. Hutchinson in her Boston home — where now is the corner of Washington and School Streets — had gathered about her an ever growing company of women to review and discuss each Sunday the sermons of the Boston pastors. This remarkable woman, "Mistress Hutchinson", was tender, "A dear Saint and servant of God," as her husband named her. But she was a firebrand of the Spirit, that seared as it gave light. And, theologically, she was right. We are sealed of God by a Covenant of Grace, and not of "Works". She had such a following that John Winthrop, who did not love her, must write, "She has



REV. JOHN WHEELWRIGHT

more resort to her for counsel about matters of conscience than any minister (I might say all the elders) in the country." No wonder, for she offered, in place of painful definitions of Old Testament Law, in terms of prohibition, the faith of free access to the Holy Spirit, in terms of hope.

Certainly the rulers of the Church-State of Boston regarded Anne Hutchinson, and now the new-come Wheelwright, as menacing to the civil-religious order of their planting. It was just the most serious of the in-flooding problems consequent upon the torrent of immigration, threatening to submerge in anarchy the little holding group of the first-comers.

So John Wheelright was given, in November 1636, a good large land-stead at "The Mount", adjacent to William Coddington's on Black's Creek, bordering on the Hutchinson land at Mount Wallaston, and to him was granted a church — a "Chappel of Ease" — a church still taking communion and holding membership in the First Church in Boston, subject to its discipline. At first, services were held at Coddington's homestead, in all probability, under the open sky: then in a rude structure, like the wattle first meeting-house of the First Church in Boston. There is a possibility that the ancient stone garrison-house was the first meeting-house, situated one half mile south of the present stone meeting-house of the First Church. This edifice was roughly put together, before 1641. It served until 1666, when a better stone house was erected on the same site. Very likely this was the first stone meeting-house in New England — which reminds us that King's Chapel where we now are was erected in 1749 of the hard cyenite of old Quincy. In those days men did not think that granite might be mined. Great surface boulders, half-imbedded in the ground, were heated by fires; heavy cannon-balls were run up chutes and dropped on the hot stones; then the fractured pieces were cut to size. To build the King's Chapel the

ground was cleared in Quincy on the Common, the Training-Green, where now stands the granite "Adams' Temple"; and so Quincy claims a part in the first Unitarian church in America.

On ■ fast Day, January 29, 1636-37, being in Boston with his fold to receive communion, John Wheelwright was asked "to exercise as a private brother by way of prophecy". Which he proceeded to do, forcefully and bluntly and critically. The old sermon survives, to confuse the modern reader with the intricacies of its sentences and the redundancies of its thoughts; but you gather what this bold independent meant to achieve, a stirring of the dry bones of Boston theology. So successful was this first burst of pulpit independence in our chief city that by the summer of 1638 there was no "Chappel of Ease" at the Mount, and the friends of Wheelwright were with him beyond the borders, as they supposed, in Exeter, founded by him; and the ever-contrary Mistress Anne was on her way, to Rhode Island; with her had fled the most influential settler at the Mount, William Coddington, builder of the first brick house in Boston, Treasurer and Assistant of the Colony, to become the founder of Newport and the first governor of Rhode Island.

Not all the settlers in old Braintree were dispersed in the exile of 1637. But the church and civic organization disappeared. By the summer of 1639 a sufficient number of settlers here were gathered to secure a new beginning. On the 26th of September 1639, six men — then considered about the right number, with a pastor, to form ■ church — stood together, in the presence of all the settlers, and by giving one another in solemn covenant the right hand of fellowship, instituted the continuing First Congregational Society in Quincy. Eight days after the affirming of the covenant fellowship, which remains today the single bond of union for the First Church, Pastor Thompson was ordained. Six months later Henry Flynt, one of the signers of the

paper in defense of John Wheelwright, petitioned to have his name deleted from that dangerous list and was ordained "Teacher".

Many evidences show that the independent Mr. Flynt was congenial to the Braintree fold — and having him, they made three separate efforts to divert the labors of Pastor Tompson to other pastures. One of these diversions was no less than a missionary journey to carry salvation, according to Puritan New England, to the cavaliers of Virginia, whence he was returned courteously but firmly to New England. His earthly ministration ceased in 1666.

Teacher Flynt died in 1668. Contention followed. The town was growing rapidly. For two years the Church-meetings were apparently battle grounds of so much freedom that the County Court intervened, sending one Moses Fiske to still the controversial waves. Braintree liked Mr. Fiske, called him, and the only episode of independence, run rather wild within the church, is over.

Rev. John Hancock was ordained in 1726 and the untimely death of this able minister came in 1744. He has recorded that the Parish, for whose support the whole community was taxed, gladly remitted in the 1730s to the members of the English Church their charges, and when they were without ministers, for they were a small company, welcomed them to the First Church, and allowed them "what posture of devotion they pleased", they standing of course while others sat, kneeling while others stood. In those days, when manners made man, that was true liberalism.

It is remarkable, for the time, that the sermons of this John Hancock, father of the Patriot, minister from 1726-44, rehearsing the first 100 years of the story of the First Church, contain no Calvinism at all: and that this church during the same pastorate voted by a large majority to do away with the requirement that new members must

give a relation of their religious experience in order to partake of full communion.

Then, out of fifty years of spiritual stagnation, New England emerged in the Great Awakening. In 1745 a young man, intelligent, eager, high-spirited, Lemuel Briant, was ordained over the Quincy Church. Only his untimely death in 1754 at the age of 32 years, prevented his name from coming to us linked as an equal third with Ebenezer Gay of Hingham and Jonathan Mayhew of the West Church, Boston, as heralds and prophets of the liberal faith. Graduated at Harvard in 1739, five years earlier than Jonathan Mayhew, he was settled in Quincy in 1745. Immediately he took his stand for undogmatic Christianity. When Jonathan Mayhew had been ordained in the West Church — always, since its origin in 1737, and its first minister William Hooper, anti-Calvinistic — not one Boston minister attended either council of ordination, so suspect was the old West Church. And when it was decided by the liberal group around Boston that the best defence of liberalism should be to attack, the out-of-Boston man, Lemuel Briant, then 27 years old, preached from the West Church pulpit the sermon which is held to be the first explosive charge of the controversy out of which our Unitarian Association emerged 65 years later. This sermon was on "The Absurdity and Blasphemy of Depreciating Moral Virtue" — the covenant of the Spirit against the Calvinistic covenant of works again. Briant exalted the rule of Scripture as "the sincere, upright, steady and universal practice of virtue". John Adams writing to Jedediah Morse in 1815 declared that he had been nurtured in the Unitarian faith since 1745. Young Briant became a marked man. Later, when he had taken away the awful catechisms from the teachers of the Parish children and had all religious teaching of the young direct from the Scripture, and had set up human reason as the judge of scripture interpretation, it was natural that a council of orthodox

churches should summon him before them;—though the final arbiters of affairs congregational in Massachusetts were the individual churches themselves. He would not go near the council. His own church was forced to call a meeting to examine their pastor. Col. John Quincy, grandfather of Abigail Adams, noblest daughter of Massachusetts, presided. The meeting commended their pastor for “the pains he took to promote a free and impartial examination into all the articles of our holy religion so that all may judge even for themselves what is right”.

Quincy's independence began in license. Who has not smiled at the one early episode of gaity in the first settlements along the shores of Massachusetts Bay? Thomas Morton, 1625, and his Merrymount, his roisterers and his May-Pole! His age detested him. History, and even grand opera, forgives the ne'er-do-well. Only the fair name “Merrymount” survives.

Then came the grand defiance, and John Wheelwright's great defense of independence, which might have sped New England 150 years ahead in its slow religious evolution. And then the measured intellectual independence of Lemuel Briant, trumpet and herald of the dawn of the new day of faith. And then in Quincy, as John Adams wrote, 65 years before the founding of the American Unitarian Association, and for all the years between, the old First Church enjoyed the Unitarian faith.

Our Church's pride, not that two Presidents lie in death in plain sarcophagi of granite within its crypt: but that of the generations of eminent servants of democracy whom the First Church has nourished, the most noteworthy have been those who deepest loved this church. John Adams gave one third of the money and all of the granite for the present edifice, dedicated in 1828. John Quincy Adams declared that to preach from that pulpit gave him supreme pleasure. And this congregational and liberal church is today true to

the ancient tradition that strong laymen and laywomen serve according to their strength.

In Quincy's granite hills is the quarry of the Granite Railway Company. Three edifices stand, and will stand, built of the riven rock of this quarry. One, the monument commemorating the first embattled defense of American liberties, Bunker Hill monument. One, a church, bold, four square, majestic, fronted by four columns still the heaviest single stones in American architecture, to enshrine liberty of the spirit. The last—set on a reef to guard the mariner from the disasters of a rock-bound coast — Minot's Ledge Light, guarding the freedom of the seas.

Let these typify the faith of Quincy's independence: the shaft of reverent remembrance, 'lest we forget'; the adequate, enduring, lovely house of our true faith; the beacon, granite, knit with iron, lofty walls of stone, holding high the Light.

ANNUAL MEETING, 1939

The Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society was held in King's Chapel, on Tuesday, May 23, 1939, at 10 o'clock, the President, Rev. Dr. Christopher R. Eliot, presiding.

The record of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting was read and approved.

The Treasurer, Mr. Harrie H. Dadmun, reported a balance of \$7.59 in the Treasury, and the sum of \$500. in the Life Membership Fund. Mr. Gorham Dana, the auditor, was unavoidably absent, but his signature attested the Treasurer's report as correct.

The Librarian's report was read and accepted. The year proved to be a most active one. More than five hundred volumes and pamphlets were received, the picture collection was increased encouragingly, and about three hundred patrons used the library. Numerous inquiries were received from American-born citizens abroad in regard to their baptismal records. This fact once again emphasized how important it is that minister's records and church books of baptisms, marriages and funerals be kept in a safe place. So useful is the service rendered by the Library that a full time Librarian was recommended.

Dr. Eliot reported for the Publication Committee, calling attention to the present issue of the Proceedings.

The Nominating Committee, Miss Elsie A. Burrage, Henry H. Putnam and J. Russell Abbott, submitted the following names of persons, who were duly elected to their respective offices:

Rev. Christopher R. Eliot, LL. D., President
Rev. Charles E. Park, D. D., Vice President
Rev. Earl M. Wilbur, D. D., Hon. Vice President
Rev. Henry W. Foote, D. D., Hon. Vice President
Rev. Frederick L. Weis, Th. D., Secretary

Harrie H. Dadmun, Esq., Treasurer
Mrs. George F. Patterson, Librarian

and the following Directors for Three Years:

Rev. Charles Graves 1939-1942

Rev. Charles Lyttle, Th. D. 1939-1942

Mr. John G. Greene then read a portion of a letter from Dr. Wilbur stating that he had completed fifteen chapters in his comprehensive history of Unitarianism. This will mean a volume of about 500 pages. A bibliography of sixty pages, carefully classified, and parallel to the history, has also been prepared.

Until his death, Dr. Francis A. Christie, with the President and Secretary, formed the publication committee. It was voted that Dr. Christie's place on this committee be filled by the Directors.

The Rev. George L. Thompson read a resolution expressing the appreciation of this Society for the work of the Church Records Survey of the Works Progress Administration, which was approved.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to the addresses of the morning. The Rev. Walter S. Swisher, D.D., spoke of the Rev. "William Henry Channing and New England Transcendentalism," being an account of a neglected though important figure in the history of Unitarianism. "Quincy and Religious Independence" was the topic of the second address which was presented by the Rev. Arthur B. Whitney, in commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the founding of the First Congregational Society of Quincy.

After the addresses the President spoke of the need of new members and of an endowment both for this society and for the Library.

The meeting was adjourned at eleven forty-five o'clock.

Respectfully submitted,

FREDERICK L. WEIS,
Secretary

EDITORIAL NOTES

In September, 1939, Rev. and Mrs. George F. Patterson went to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where on October 1, Mr. Patterson was installed minister of All Soul's Unitarian Church. This change made necessary the appointment of a substitute librarian for the American Unitarian Association Library at 25 Beacon Street and for the Unitarian Historical Society. Miss Edith F. Gardner, was appointed Librarian and Office Assistant.

Mrs. Patterson, while engaged for only a day and a half each week, had taken a deep interest in the library and rendered expert service as far as this limited time made possible. This was chiefly in sorting and filing pamphlets and photographs, arranging and cataloging books and manuscripts received, answering letters of inquiry, and rendering valuable assistance to ministers and students as opportunities arose.

Miss Gardner, as Office Assistant and Librarian, will be in the building every day, able to give considerable time to the library and always ready to receive visitors and render such service as may be possible.

The Association has appointed a Library Committee as follows: Everett M. Baker, Chairman; Christopher R. Eliot, Henry Wilder Foote, Robert Dale Richardson, and Frederick L. Weis.

Volume VII, No. 1, of the Transactions of the English Unitarian Historical Society (founded 1915), has been received, filling us with friendly envy by its many valuable articles, and revealing the interest in historical research "over there". All of them carry back at least a hundred years and one, three hundred, which approaches our limit! The subjects include "The Growth of Toleration" by Raymond V. Holt, "The Toleration Act of 1689", by F. Kenworthy, "The Psalmody of the Old Congregation in Belfast, 1760-1840", by Wm. H. McCafferty. Friendly greetings to the Hon. Editor.

Wayland, Massachusetts: The First Parish in Wayland celebrated on Sunday, Jan. 21, its three hundredth anniversary. The State was represented by Hon. Joseph R. Cotton, president of the Massachusetts Senate, and the Unitarian Association by its president, Rev. Frederick M. Eliot. The Mother Church, Watertown, and thirty neighboring churches, sent their ministers. The first Meeting House was built of logs and the roof was thatched. It was only thirty feet long by twenty wide. The second church also was thatched and had a palisade to protect it from the Indians. The present building was erected in 1815 and is said to be one of the best examples of colonial architecture in America. Its best remembered minister was Edmund Hamilton Sears, author of the Christmas Carols, "Calm on the Listening Ear of Night" and "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear". Its first minister, and for thirty-eight years, was Edmund Brown, from Sudbury, England.

Quincy, Massachusetts: The 300th anniversary of the First Church in Quincy, was celebrated on Tuesday Evening, September 26, and on Sunday, October 1, at 10.45 A. M.

On Tuesday, there were greetings from the Hon. Horace T. Cahill, Lieutenant-Governor, representing the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Rev. Charles E. Park, D. D., minister of the First Church in Boston; and the Hon. Thomas S. Burgin, Mayor of Quincy. The churches of Quincy were represented by Rev. J. Lyle McCorison, Jr., of The First Church in Braintree, and Rev. Arthur B. Whitney, of the congregation celebrating. An Historic Address was delivered by Prof. Kenneth B. Murdock, of Harvard University, whose subject was "The Puritan Church and Literary Culture".

On Sunday, the Anniversary Sermon was given by Rev. Frederick M. Eliot, D. D., President of the American Unitarian Association.

The closing hymn was written by Rev. James Flint for Quincy's Bicentennial, 1839.

"In pleasant lands have fallen the lines
That bound our goodly heritage;
And safe beneath our sheltering vines
Our youth is blest, and soothed our age".

A letter from Dr. Earl M. Wilbur (Jan. 9, 1940, Berkeley, Cal.), has the following interesting paragraphs:

I have to-day received a post-card from Poland, the first communication of any kind for months. It is from Stanislas Vayhinger, the gentleman who provided on his own home tract the site for the Socinus monument. Along with customary holiday greetings he writes, under date of December 11, "Das SOCINUS Denkmal in Luslawice, wie auch das Haus, sind bis jetzt in ganz gutem Zustande geblieben". Which being interpreted is, The Socinus monument at Luslawice, as well as my house, have thus far continued in perfectly good condition. That is good news, and it was exquisitely thoughtful in him to communicate it.

I have thus far had no other word from any friend in Poland, and doubt whether my letters have reached them. Indeed, the N. Y. Times is said to have reported that all the Krakow professors had been sent to concentration camps. If so, may Heaven be merciful to them! I can not suppose that the four wonderful old libraries at Warsaw, and perhaps a fifth near Poznań, have wholly, if at all, escaped destruction, since they were in the area of the fighting. How fortunate that I was able first to lay them under tribute for our purposes! I am now in process of composing another Polish chapter, for the History.

ANNUAL MEMBERS of the UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Russell J. Abbott, Brookline, Mass.
 Rev. Harold G. Arnold, West Roxbury, Mass.
 Miss Mary L. Baker, Templeton, Mass.
 Miss Louisa Blake, Brookline, Mass.
 Miss M. L. Blake, Boston, Mass.
 Miss Emily F. Blaney, Hingham, Mass.
 Rev. William Channing Brown, Littleton, Mass.
 Prof. George Lincoln Burr, Ithaca, New York.
 Miss Elsie A. Burrage, Chestnut Hill, Mass.
 Mr. Clarence W. Colburn, No. Cambridge, Mass.
 Miss Emma L. Coleman, Boston, Mass.
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 Rev. Frederick M. Eliot, D. D., LL. D., Boston, Mass.
 Rev. Samuel A. Eliot, D. D., LL. D., Cambridge, Mass.
 Rev. W. G. Eliot, Jr. D.D., Portland, Oregon.
 Mrs. Lewis A. Elliott, Brookline, Mass.
 Alfred W. Elson, Belmont, Mass.
 First Congregational Parish of Arlington, Mass., F. A. Turner, Treas.
 First Parish Church, Watertown, Mass., Ralph S. Park, Treas.
 Rev. Dan H. Fenn, Chestnut Hill, Mass.
 Rev. Henry W. Foote, D. D., Belmont, Mass.
 Rev. Frederic Gill, D. D., Arlington, Mass.
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 Rev. Dana M. Greeley, Boston, Mass.
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 Rev. Arthur Heeb, Stow, Mass.
 Waldo C. Hodgdon, Boston, Mass.
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 Rev. Frederick Lewis Weis, Th. D., Lancaster, Mass.
 Mrs. Frederick A. Wetherbee, Newton, Mass.
 Rev. F. S. C. Wicks, D. D., Indianapolis, Indiana
 Rev. Earl M. Wilbur, D. D., Berkeley, Cal.
 C. Conrad Wright, Cambridge, Mass.

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Miss E. Josephine Brazier, Kennebunkport, Maine.
 Rev. Christopher R. Eliot, LL. D., Cambridge, Mass.
 Rev. John C. Perkins, D. D., Boston, Mass.
 Mrs. George M. Reed, Dorchester, Mass.
 Mrs. Edgar Scott Chilteris, Bar Harbor, Maine.
 Miss Evelyn Sears, Boston, Mass.
 Henry D. Sharpe, Esq., Providence, R. I.
 Albert H. Wiggin, New York City.

LIST OF ANNUAL ADDRESSES DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1901—1939

The earliest meetings of the Society were held in Channing Hall in the building of the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, and were informal in character. Since 1904 the Annual Meeting has been regularly held in King's Chapel, Boston, except in 1923, when it was held in King's Chapel Parish House, and in 1930 when it was held in Hale Chapel, at the First Church of Boston. The list of speakers and their subjects is as follows:

- May 23, 1901 Brief addresses on Rev. Samuel Willard, D.D., Rev. Cyrus Bartol, D.D., and Rev. Alexander Young, D.D., by Rev. C. E. Park, Rev. George W. Solley, Rev. E. E. Hale, Rev. S. B. Stewart, and Rev. Edward J. Young.
- May 29, 1902 Prof. T. G. Masaryk, Prague, Bohemia.
"The Los von Rom Movement in Austria."
- May 21, 1903 Rev. Alfred Altherr, Basle, Switzerland.
"The Origin and Growth of the Liberal Church in Switzerland."
- May 26, 1904 Edwin D. Mead, Esq., Boston.
"The Relation of the Unitarian Fathers to the Peace Movement in America."
Rev. C. W. Wendte, Boston.
"Laelius and Faustus Socinus."
- May 25, 1905 Rev. Edward Everett Hale, Boston.
"The Fort Palmer Episode and other Unitarian Memoirs."
- May 24, 1906 Rev. John Carroll Perkins, Portland, Maine.
"The Part of the Pioneers."

- May 23, 1907 Rev. C. E. Park, Boston.
"Tablets and Memorials in our Churches."
- May 28, 1908 Rev. James De Normandie, Roxbury.
"Some Eminent Unitarians."
- May 27, 1909 Rev. Bradley Gilman, Canton.
"Holmes as a Religious Teacher."
- May 26, 1910 Rev. H. G. Spaulding, Boston.
"Harvard College Forty Years Ago, and the Old Harvard Divinity School."
- May 25, 1911 Rev. C. E. Park, Boston.
"History of Ordination and Installation Practices."
- May 23, 1912 Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, Cambridge.
"The Harvard School of Hymnody."
 See "Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society of Great Britain," Vol. III, Part 2, October, 1924.
- May 22, 1913 Rev. James De Normandie, Roxbury.
"History of the Harvard Church in Charlestown."
- May 28, 1914 Rev. James De Normandie, Roxbury.
"The Brattle Street Church, Boston."
 See "Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society," Vol. 47, pp 223 to 231, entitled "The Manifesto Church."
- May 27, 1915 Rev. Charles Graves, Albany, N. Y.
"An Early Unitarian Outpost."
 See "The Christian Register" June 24, 1915, pp. 584-586 and July 1, pp. 608-611, also "Reprint" by Geo. H. Ellis Co., 1915.
- May 28, 1916 Hon. Winslow Warren, Dedham.
"The Value of Contemporary Opinion."
 See "Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. 49, pp. 349-356.
- May 25, 1917 Rev. C. E. Park, Boston.
"Possibilities of Beauty in the Congregational Order."
 See "American Journal of Theology," Vol. XXIII, No. 1, January, 1919.
- May 23, 1918 Rev. G. L. Chaney, Salem.
"The Hollis Street Church, Boston."
 See "The Christian Register," Nov. 28, 1918, p. 1134; Dec. 5, pp. 1166-7; Dec. 12, pp. 1191-2; December 12, pp. 1215-6.

- May 22, 1919 Rev. Charles H. Lyttle, Brooklyn, N. Y.
"The Pentecost of Unitarianism."
 A study of Channing's Baltimore Sermon of 1819. Published for the Unitarian Historical Society by The Beacon Press, Boston, 1920.
- May 27, 1920 Professor W. W. Fenn, Cambridge.
"The Farewell Address of John Robinson."
- May 26, 1921 Professor Ephraim Emerton, Cambridge.
"The Unitarian Debt to Orthodoxy."
- May 25, 1922 Rev. W. G. Eliot, Jr., Portland, Oregon.
"The Early Days of Unitarianism on the Pacific Coast."
- May 24, 1923 Professor Waldo S. Pratt, Hartford, Conn.
"The Earliest New England Music."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society," Vol. I, Part II, 1928.
- May 22, 1924 Dr. Kenneth B. Murdock, Cambridge.
"Notes on Increase and Cotton Mather."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society," Vol. I, Part I, 1925.
- March 19, 1925 (Special Meeting)
 Rev. R. Nicol Cross, Hampstead, London.
"Historical Sketch of British Unitarianism."
- May 12, 1925 Professor W. W. Fenn, Cambridge.
"How the Schism Came."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society," Vol. I, Part I, 1925.
- May 27, 1926 Mr. Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., Boston.
"The Churches of Boston in 1860."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society," Vol. I, Part II, 1928.
- May 26, 1927 Professor W. W. Fenn, Cambridge.
"Dr. Sylvester Judd, Unitarian Churchman in Maine."
- May 24, 1928 Professor Francis A. Christie.
"Theodore Parker and Modern Theology."
- May 23, 1929 Rev. Thomas H. Billings, Salem, Mass.
"Early History of the First Church in Salem, Mass."
 Miss Harriet E. Johnson, Boston.
"Early History of Arlington Street Church, Boston."

- May 22, 1930 Rev. Charles E. Park, Boston.
"The First Four Churches of Massachusetts Bay."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society," Vol. II, Part I, 1931.
- May 21, 1931 Rev. Rögnvaldur Petursson, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
"The Development of Liberal Religion in Iceland."
 Rev. George F. Patterson, Boston.
"The Rise and Progress of Icelandic Unitarian Churches in the United States and Canada."
 Rev. Amandus Norman, Hanska, Minn.
"Kristofer Janson, as Man, Poet, and Religious Reformer."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society," Vol. II, Part II.
- May 26, 1932 Dr. George Lincoln Burr, Ithaca, N. Y.
"Liberals and Liberty Four Hundred Years Ago."
 Rev. Earl M. Wilbur
"Socinian Propaganda in Germany 300 Years Ago."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society," Vol. III, Part I.
- May 25, 1933 Rev. Frederick R. Griffin of Philadelphia.
"Joseph Priestley."
 Rev. Henry Wilder Foote of Belmont, Mass.
"Theodore Clapp."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society," Vol. III, Part II.
- May 24, 1934 Rev. Christopher R. Eliot of Cambridge.
"Joseph Tuckerman."
 George Reeves Throop, of St. Louis, Mo.
"William Greenleaf Eliot."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society," Vol. IV, Part I.
- May 23, 1935 Rev. Frederick Lewis Weis of Lancaster, Mass.
"Ebenezer Gay of Hingham and his Influence as a Pioneer in Liberal Religion."
 Rev. Earl M. Wilbur, of Berkeley, Calif.
"The Grave and Monument of Faustus Socinus at Luslawice."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society, Vol. IV, Part II.

- May 21, 1936 Rev. John Carroll Perkins of Boston.
"Some Distinguished Laymen in King's Chapel History"
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society", Vol. V, Part I.
 Allen French of Concord, Mass.
"Two Concord Laymen: John and Samuel Hoar."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society", Vol. V, Part I.
- May 27, 1937 Rev. Samuel A. Eliot, of Cambridge, Mass.
"A Cradle of Liberty—Being the Story of the West Church, Boston."
 Harriet E. Johnson, of Boston, Mass.
"The Early History of Arlington Street Church."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society", Vol. V, Part II.
- May 24, 1938 Rev. Wallace W. Robbins of St. Paul, Minn.
"Charles A. Farley, Messenger of Liberalism."
 Professor William W. Fenn, of Cambridge, Mass.
"Sylvester Judd": The Birthright Church
 Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, of Belmont, Mass.
Catalogue of American Unitarian Hymn-Books
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society", Vol. VI, Part I.
- May 23, 1939 Rev. Walter S. Swisher, of Boston, Mass.
"William Henry Channing."
 Rev. Arthur B. Whitney, of Quincy, Mass.
"Quincy — 300 Years of Independence."
 See "Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society", Vol. VI, Part II.

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